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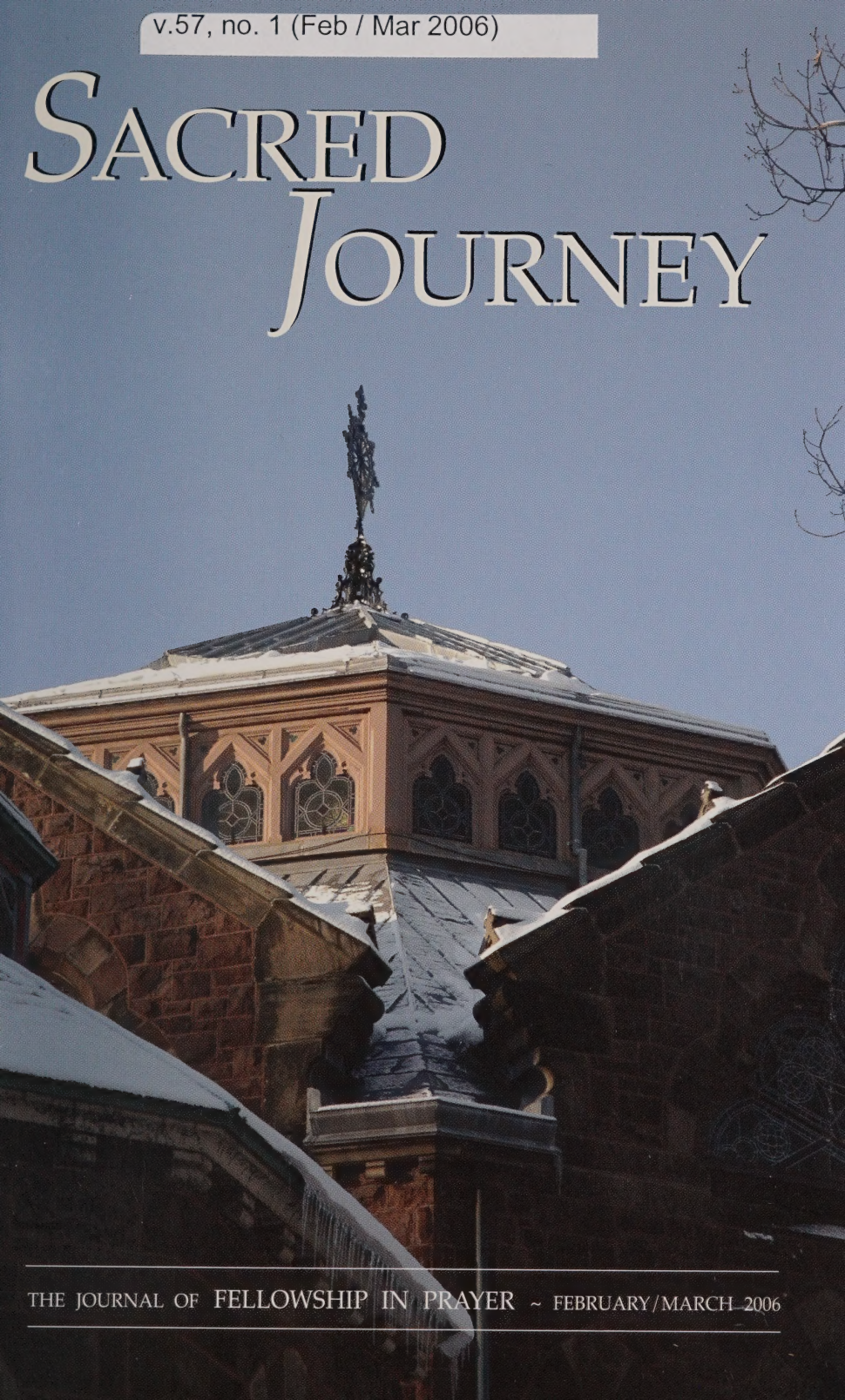

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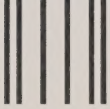

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CONTENTS

Vol. 57, No. 1, February/March 2006

Editorial
Look Both Ways 2

Our Feature
On Love
Mother Teresa 4

Illuminations 12

A Muslim at the Catholic Worker
Eboo Patel 14

An Interfaith Family in Ghana
Kofi Agyepong 22

Poetry 24

IT Loves to Happen
Sonya Milton 28

The Path of Compassion
Jack Kornfield 32

Prayers 36

Forays Over the Rainbow
Jean Falls 38

Sabbath Time
Susan Gregg-Schroeder 42

Book Reviews 44

Endpiece 48

Cover photo by Louise Hutner

Look Both Ways

One's spiritual journey through life seems to gather meaning and purpose, and to have an impact in the world, not because of the particular faith context in which one travels, but because of the two-fold path one pursues: an inward journey of self-discovery and growth, and simultaneously an outward course in service to others. Some of us are firmly rooted and comfortable in a faith tradition, others are searching for a path that suits them; but the fundamentals of each person's inward journey and outward service to others appear to be quite similar across faith traditions. They include love, compassion, and faith in Something that is ironically both deep within us and that contains us.

The spiritual journey seems always to have contained these two elements: the pursuit of inner growth and the search for deeper connection to that Something which is greater than oneself.

The more one explores this concept of inward and outward journeys entwined, in any faith tradition, the clearer it becomes that they are interdependent, that pursuing one without the other results in an incomplete journey—meaningful and valid as far as it goes, but incomplete.

In this issue of our journal, we offer thoughts on discovering our connection to both an indwelling spirit and a universal oneness, as expressed by figures in Christianity (Mother Teresa, pg. 4), Islam (Eboo Patel, pg. 14), and Buddhism (Jack Kornfield, pg. 32). You will also find several personal stories addressing this dual process of inward searching and outward service.

To begin this issue's journey, we offer you Mother Teresa's thoughts on love and service which, when genuine, are inseparable partners:

"If we really want to conquer the world, we will not be able to do it with bombs or with other weapons of destruction. Let us conquer the world with our love. Let us interweave our lives with bonds of sacrifice and love, and it will be possible for us to conquer the world."

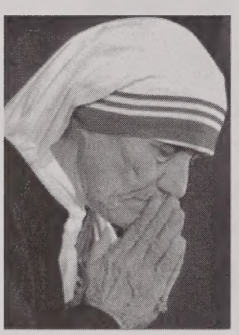
Eboo Patel, a Muslim religious scholar and interfaith leader, founded the Chicago Interfaith Youth Core "to cultivate a generation of compassionate global leaders." He began his religious work in a Catholic Worker house. While he had found his mission in life, he had not yet found "a place where you fit, body and soul." He writes, "It was time to find a faith home. I began reading across religious traditions. . . But my attraction to these traditions was intellectual. Similar to my experience with Christianity, I felt that my soul did not fit in any of them." To see how he came full circle to his roots and his spiritual home, and to a deeper connection both to his own tradition and to all humanity, please turn to his story.

As you read the stories, poems, prayers, and more in these pages, may something touch you in just the right way to deepen your connection to yourself and to our shared world.

OUR FEATURE

On Love

Mother Teresa



One of the world's most well-known and beloved spiritual leaders, Mother Teresa has inspired millions with her extraordinary example of compassionate and tireless work for the poor, the ill, and the outcast. Born in Yugoslavia, Mother Teresa joined the Sisters of Loreto, an Irish community of nuns with missions in India, at the age of eighteen. She took her initial vows as a nun in 1931 and taught at St. Mary's High School in Calcutta until 1948, when she came across a woman dying in front of a Calcutta hospital. She stayed with the woman until she died. From that point on, Mother Teresa dedicated her life to helping the poorest of the poor. In 1950 she founded her own order, the Missionaries of Charity, which has grown from 12 sisters in India to thousands serving those in need in over 500 centers worldwide. Mother Teresa and her order have established homes for the dying, as well as for drug addicts, prostitutes, battered women, and people with AIDS, in many countries. Mother Teresa also gained international recognition for her efforts on behalf of world peace. When she won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979 she insisted that $6,000, funds which would normally be used for a ceremonial awards

banquet, be donated to the poor in Calcutta. This money would permit her to feed hundreds for a year. Mother Teresa died at the age of 87 in 1997. In October, 2003 Pope John Paul II announced the beatification of Mother Teresa, the first step towards her being canonized as a saint of the Catholic Church.

We have a great deal of worth in the eyes of God. I never tire of saying over and over again that God loves us. It is a wonderful thing that God Himself loves me tenderly. That is why we should have courage, joy, and the conviction that nothing can separate us from the love of Christ.

I feel that we too often focus only on the negative aspect of life—on what is bad. If we were more willing to see the good and the beautiful things that surround us, we would be able to transform our families. From there, we would change our next-door neighbors and then others who live in our neighborhood or city. We would be able to bring peace and love to our world, which hungers so much for these things.

If we really want to conquer the world, we will not be able to do it with bombs or with other weapons of destruction. Let us conquer the world with our love. Let us interweave our lives with bonds of sacrifice and love, and it will be possible for us to conquer the world. We do not need to carry out grand things in order to show a great love for God and for our neighbor. It is the intensity of love we put into our gestures that makes them into something beautiful for God.

Peace and war start within one's own home. If we really want peace for the world, let us start by loving one another within our families. Sometimes it is hard

for us to smile at one another. It is often difficult for the husband to smile at his wife or for the wife to smile at her husband.

In order for love to be genuine, it has to be above all a love for our neighbor. We must love those who are nearest to us, in our own family. From there, love spreads toward whoever may need us.

It is easy to love those who live far away. It is not always easy to love those who live right next to us. It is easier to offer a dish of rice to meet the hunger of a needy person than to comfort the loneliness and the anguish of someone in our own home who does not feel loved.

I want you to go and find the poor in your homes. Above all, your love has to start there. I want you to be the good news to those around you. I want you to be concerned about your next-door neighbor. Do you know who your neighbor is?

True love is love that causes us pain, that hurts, and yet brings us joy. That is why we must pray to God and ask Him to give us the courage to love.

From the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. If your heart is full of love, you will speak of love. I want you all to fill your hearts with great love. Don't imagine that love, to be true and burning, must be extraordinary. No; what we need in our love is the continuous desire to love the One we love.

One day I found among the debris a woman who was burning with fever. About to die, she kept repeating, "It is my son who has done it!" I took her in my arms and carried her home to the convent. On the way I urged her to forgive her son. It took a good while before I could hear her say, "Yes, I forgive him." She

said it with a feeling of genuine forgiveness, just as she was about to pass away. The woman was not aware that she was suffering, that she was burning with fever, that she was dying. What was breaking her heart was her own son's lack of love.

Holy souls sometimes undergo great inward trial, and they know darkness. But if we want others to become aware of the presence of Jesus, we must be the first ones convinced of it.

There are thousands of people who would love to have what we have, yet God has chosen us to be where we are today to share the joy of loving others. He wants us to love one another, to give ourselves to each other until it hurts. It does not matter how much we give, but how much love we put into our giving.

In the words of our Holy Father, each one of us must be able "to cleanse what is dirty, to warm what is lukewarm, to strengthen what is weak, to enlighten what is dark." We must not be afraid to proclaim Christ's love and to love as He loved.

Where God is, there is love; and where there is love, there always is an openness to serve.The world is hungry for God.

When we all see God in each other, we will love one another as He loves us all. That is the fulfillment of the law, to love one another. This is all Jesus came to teach us: that God loves us, and that He wants us to love one another as He loves us.

We must know that we have been created for greater things, not just to be a number in the world, not just to go for diplomas and degrees, this work and that work. We have been created in order to love and to be loved.

Always be faithful in little things, for in them our strength lies. To God nothing is little. He cannot make anything small; they are infinite. Practice fidelity in the least things, not for their own sake, but for the sake of the great thing that is the will of God, and which I respect greatly.

Do not pursue spectacular deeds. We must deliberately renounce all desires to see the fruit of our labor, doing all we can as best we can, leaving the rest in the hands of God. What matters is the gift of your self, the degree of love that you put into each one of your actions.

Do not allow yourselves to be disheartened by any failure as long as you have done your best. Neither glory in your success, but refer all to God in deepest thankfulness.

If you are discouraged, it is a sign of pride because it shows you trust in your own powers. Never bother about people's opinions. Be humble and you will never be disturbed. The Lord has willed me here where I am. He will offer a solution.

When we handle the sick and the needy we touch the suffering body of Christ and this touch will make us heroic; it will make us forget the repugnance and the natural tendencies in us. We need the eyes of deep faith to see Christ in the broken body and dirty clothes under which the most beautiful one among the sons of men hides. We shall need the hands of Christ to touch these bodies wounded by pain and suffering. Intense love does not measure—it just gives.

Our works of charity are nothing but the overflow of our love of God from within.

Charity is like a living flame: The drier the fuel, the livelier the flame. Likewise, our hearts, when they are free

of all earthly causes, commit themselves in free service. Love of God must give rise to a total service. The more disgusting the work, the greater must love be, as it takes succor to the Lord disguised in the rags of the poor.

Charity, to be fruitful, must cost us. Actually, we hear so much about charity, yet we never give it its full importance: God put the commandment of loving our neighbor on the same footing as the first commandment.

In order for us to be able to love, we need to have faith because faith is love in action; and love in action is service. In order for us to be able to love, we have to see and touch. Faith in action through prayer, faith in action through service: each is the same thing, the same love, the same compassion.

Some years have gone by, but I will never forget a young French girl who came to Calcutta. She looked so worried. She went to work in our home for dying destitutes. Then, after ten days, she came to see me. She hugged me and said, "I've found Jesus!" I asked where she found Jesus. "In the home for dying destitutes," she answered. "And what did you do after you found Him?" "I went to confession and Holy Communion for the first time in fifteen years." Then I said again, "What else did you do?" "I sent my parents a telegram saying that I found Jesus." I looked at her and I said, "Now, pack up and go home. Go home and give joy, love, and peace to your parents." She went home radiating joy, because her heart was with joy; and what joy she brought to her family! Why? Because she had lost the innocence of her youth and had gotten it back again.

God loves a cheerful giver. The best way to show your gratitude to God and people is to accept everything with joy. A joyful heart is a normal result of a heart burning

with love. Joy is strength. The poor felt attracted to Jesus because a higher power dwelt in Him and flowed from Him—out of His eyes, His hands, His body—completely released and present to God and to men.

Let nothing so disturb us, so fill us with sorrow or discouragement, as to make us forfeit the joy of the resurrection. Joy is not simply a matter of temperament in the service of God and souls; it is always hard. All the more reason why we should try to acquire it and make it grow in our hearts. We may not be able to give much but we can always give the joy that springs from a heart that is in love with God.

All over the world people are hungry and thirsty for God's love. We meet that hunger by spreading joy. Joy is one of the best safeguards against temptation. Jesus can take full possession of our soul only if it surrenders itself joyfully.

Someone once asked me, "Are you married?" And I said, "Yes, and I find it sometimes very difficult to smile at Jesus because He can be very demanding."

God is within me with a more intimate presence than that whereby I am in myself: "In Him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28 NAB). It is He who gives life to all, who gives power and being to all that exists. But for His sustaining presence, all things would cease to be and fall back into nothingness. Consider that you are in God, surrounded and encompassed by God, swimming in God. God's love is infinite. With God, nothing is impossible.

Excerpted from No Greater Love, *by Mother Teresa © 1997, 2001. Reprinted with permission of New World Library, Novato, CA, USA 94949. Copies available at 800-441-2100 or online at www.newworldlibrary.com.*

Louise Hutner

ILLUMINATIONS

Walk together, talk together, O you people of the earth, and then, only then, can you have peace.

~ *Vedic teaching*

Waking up this morning, I smile. Twenty-four brand new hours are before me. I vow to live fully in each moment and to look at all beings with eyes of compassion.

~ *Thich Nhat Hanh*

When hope is gone, there is still love. Always, beyond faith, beyond hope, always, there is still love.

~ *Edward Mason Morgan*

The whole practice of spiritual surrender is about letting go of fear and opening our hearts up to the miracle of love that is all around us.

~ *Kathy Cordova*

We are put on earth for a little space, that we may learn to bear the beams of love.

~ *William Blake*

You spent the first half of your life becoming somebody. Now you can work on becoming nobody. For then, there is no tension, no pretense, no one trying to be anyone or anything. The natural state of the mind shines through unobstructed—and the mind's natural state is pure love.

~ *Ram Dass*

At the end of our life, we shall be judged by love.

~ *Saint John of the Cross*

At the end of life, our questions are very simple: Did I live fully? Did I love well?

~ *Jack Kornfield*

A thankful person is thankful under all circumstances. A complaining soul complains even if he lives in paradise.

~ *Baha'u'llah*

Do you have the patience to wait till your mud settles and the water is clear? Can you remain unmoving till the right action arises by itself?

~ *Lao Tzu*

If I am not concerned for myself, who will be for me? But if I am only concerned for myself, what good am I? And if now is not the time to act, when will it be?

~ *Hillel*

May we all grow in grace and peace, and not neglect the silence that is printed in the center of our being. It will not fail us.

~ *Thomas Merton*

Make a [silent] prayer acknowledging yourself as a vehicle of light, giving thanks for all that has come today.

~ *Dhyani Ywahoo*

Love is the light that dissolves all walls between souls, families, and nations.

~ *Paramahansa Yogananda*

A Muslim At The Catholic Worker

Eboo Patel

I spent my high school years in suburban Chicago dreaming of the future comforts of fat paychecks. When I went to college at the University of Illinois in Champaign, I saw the other America—homeless Vietnam vets drinking mouthwash for the alcohol, minority students shunted to the back of overfull classrooms, battered women unable to find space at too-small shelters. I knew that America saw these shadows but chose not to call them. I did not want that disease.

So I flailed about wildly. I went to demonstrations and raged against the machine, but I did not see it improving anybody's life. I spent one summer living in communes and another traveling with the Grateful Dead, but decided escape wasn't my trip. I pierced my tongue and dressed in drag on campus, but realized that it wasn't a fashion revolution I was after. "Try being

Eboo Patel, a religious scholar and interfaith leader, established the Chicago Interfaith Youth Core to cultivate a generation of compassionate global leaders. The organization brings young people of all faiths together to do service work, to reflect on their faith, and to better understand the connection between religion and social justice. Patel was named one of thirty social visionaries under the age of thirty who are changing the world by Utne Reader in 2002. For more information on Patel and the Chicago Interfaith Youth Core see www.ifyc.org.

constructive," a professor advised me. So I started volunteering at shelters and schools, but I knew a broken world needed more than flimsy tape.

Few shared my frantic outlook. Most people were happy changing their clothes to fit the climate. Some folks left for places where the climate suited their clothes. A handful cursed the climate, shrugged, and went on their way. I wanted to change the climate. My loneliness was freezing.

Somebody said to me, "Go visit St. Jude's Catholic Worker house on the other end of town."

"What's a Catholic Worker house?" I asked.

"Part shelter for poor folks, part anarchist movement for Catholic radicals, part community for anyone who enters. Really, it's about a whole new way of living. You've got to go there to know."

From the moment I entered St. Jude's, it was clear to me that this was different from any other place I'd been. I couldn't figure out whether it was a shelter or a home. There was nobody doing intake. There was no executive director's office. White, black, and brown kids played together in the living room. I smelled food and heard English and Spanish voices coming from the kitchen. The first thing somebody said to me was, "Are you staying for dinner?" "Yes," I said.

The salad and stew were simple and filling, and the conversation came easy. After dinner, I asked someone, "Who is staff here? And who are the residents?"

"That's not the best way to think about this place," the person told me. "We're a community. The question we ask is 'What's your story?' There is a family here who immigrated from a small village in Mexico. The father found out about this place from his Catholic parish.

They've been here for four months, enough time for the father to find a job and scrape together the security deposit on an apartment. There are others here with graduate degrees who believe that sharing their lives with the needy is their Christian calling. If you want to know the philosophy behind all of this, read Dorothy Day."

I did. And it made more sense to me than anything my Marxist professors lectured on, or my pre-law friends dreamed about, or my rock-and-roll records drove at. Recalling the thoughts of her college days, Dorothy wrote: "I did not see anyone taking off his coat and giving it to the poor. I didn't see anyone having a banquet and calling in the lame, the halt, and the blind. And those who were doing it, like the Salvation Army, did not appeal to me. I wanted life and I wanted the abundant life. I wanted it for others too."

Dorothy's vision of a culture of kindness was joined by a radical social outlook: "Why was so much done in remedying social evils instead of avoiding them in the first place? . . . Where were the saints to try to change the social order, not just to minister to the slaves but to do away with slavery?"

Most importantly for me at the scowly-skeptical age of nineteen, Dorothy had lived her commitments in solidarity with the poor, not just ministering to them; she had lived in resistance to the system, with the jail time to prove it.

I spent a lot of time in Catholic Worker houses during my college years and early twenties. I cut carrots for the soup kitchen at Mary House in New York City, demonstrated at the Pentagon with Catholic Workers in Washington, D.C., even lived for a few weeks at the St. Francis House on the north side of Chicago. I

marveled at Dorothy Day because she reimagined the world and lived her life in a way that created it anew. She called America's shadows to her dinner table, served them with love, and sat with them as a friend. It was the best antidote that I had seen for America's sickness.

And mine. Dorothy once said, "I'm working toward a world in which it would be easier for people to behave decently." I wanted to behave decently. The Catholic Worker was a chance to do justice for the marginalized and to achieve redemption for myself. Redemption meant being saved from the sickness of selfishness. Being cured meant joining humanity. And there was something transcendent in that.

It was at the Catholic Worker that I discovered a desire to touch the pure love of elsewhere. This was the love that Dorothy wrote about, the love that sourced and sustained her commitment. My faith journey was sparked not by a desire to enter heaven or from a fear of hell. It was neither about escape nor seclusion. I had no interest in the sin-and-salvation kerosene of the religious right or the soupy spirituality of the New Age.

The faith I wanted would help me love and grieve and celebrate with all humanity. It would shape my eyes to see dignity and divinity in the dirty and ragged. I felt in my bones that humanity was meant for something more than we were achieving.

J. M. Coetzee says: "All creatures bring into this world the memory of justice." I knew that we had a purpose beyond providing for our own comfort. Abraham Joshua Heschel writes: "God is hiding in the world. Our task is to let the divine emerge from our deeds." I wanted to live the truth of June Jordan's vision: "I am a stranger/ learning to worship the strangers/around me."

The religious life of the Catholic Worker inspired me. I loved the prayers for strength to do the work of justice. I found the Christian hymns and sermons elevating. I read the books of Worker heroes like Peter Maurin and Thomas Merton. But I always found myself standing at a slight angle to the central symbols of the Christian faith: the cross, the blood, the resurrection. And I never felt any desire to convert.

A short conversation with the leader of a Catholic Worker house in Atlanta was an important turning point in my faith journey. I asked if I could spend a summer working at his community. "Are you a Christian?" he asked. "No," I said. "Then it will be very difficult for you to take full part in the life of this community. Find a place where you fit, body and soul."

I understood his comment as an invitation, not an insult. It was time to find a faith home. I began reading across religious traditions. I read Ram Dass on Gandhi and Thich Nhat Hanh on the life of the Buddha. I found my head nodding to nearly every article of Bahai social teaching and felt as if I had discovered a gold mine when I came across the thought of the Jewish mystic Zalman Schachter. But my attraction to these traditions was intellectual. Similar to my experience with Christianity, I felt that my soul did not fit in any of them.

The one tradition that I did not explore was Islam, the religion I had been raised in. Islam was the tradition my parents carried with them when they left India. America was the situation that provided them with possibilities both stated and shrouded, opportunities that facilitated upward mobility but scattered centering values. My father was a successful advertising executive. My mother earned her CPA and began building a career. The ritual

dimensions of Islam never fit comfortably into our American-style lives. We rarely attended Friday prayer and only occasionally gathered at home as a family to bow our heads to God. Still, we were Muslims. We did not eat pork. We said *Bismillah* when beginning new projects. We prayed *tasbi* during difficult times. And we helped people, especially Muslim immigrants, do everything from getting driver's licenses to earning advanced degrees.

Neglecting Islam was not so much a comment on the content of the religion as it was an adolescent habit of discriminating against the familiar. But, as James Baldwin writes, "Later, in the midnight hour, the missing identity aches."

I began a Buddhist (at least, what I thought was Buddhist) meditation practice when I was twenty-two. It consisted of sitting still and thinking about nothing. But the Ismaili Muslim mantra my mother whispered in my ear when I was a child—*Ya Ali, Ya Muhammad*— kept rising into my consciousness. In an attempt to stick to the program, I tried to push it out. Finally, it occurred to me that this was the program—I was a Muslim. My spiritual home had lived in my soul since my birth and before.

Later that year, I went to India to visit my grandmother. I woke up one morning to find a new person sitting on the sofa. She was barefoot and wearing a torn white nightgown several sizes too large for her.

"Who is she?" I asked my grandmother. "Call her Anisa. I don't know her real name," she told me. "Her father and uncle beat her, so she has come here. We will keep her safe."

My grandmother had been sheltering abused women for forty years by hiding them in her home. Those who are interested in education, she sends to school. For those

who want to live with family in other parts of India, she pays for their travels. Others have just stayed and helped my grandmother around the house until they got married and started their own families. My grandmother has pictures of some of them, faded black-and-white shots, with pencil scribbles on the back telling the story.

After hearing the stories of about a dozen of these women, I wanted to know one more—my grandmother's. "Why do you do this?" I asked.

"Because I'm a Muslim. This is what Muslims do," she said.

My grandmother was a Muslim Dorothy Day. Her home had been a Muslim Catholic Worker. The heroes I was looking for were within my religion, in my very family.

I immersed myself in Islam. I sought examples of giants who had fought tyranny with love, and found them in Farid Esack and Badshah Khan. I desired beauty and found it in the poetry of Rumi and Ihn Arabi. I discovered the stories that revealed the grand purpose of humankind that Allah made humanity *abd* and *khalifa*—Allah's servant and representative, on earth. I felt the truth of Islam in my soul—that Allah created Adam through the spirit in Allah's breath, that Allah chose Muhammad to be Prophet, and that Allah wanted me to submit to the will of Allah. I felt embraced by the compassion of Allah, forgiven by the mercy of Allah, and guided by the light of Allah.

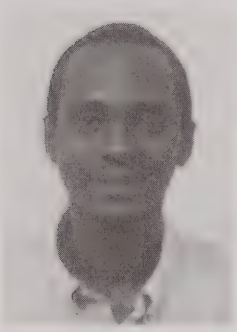
I found full nourishment in Islam for ideas I initially encountered in other traditions. I am a Muslim whose first faith hero was Dorothy Day.

Excerpt by Eboo Patel is from Awakening the Spirit, Inspiring the Soul: 30 Stories of Interspiritual Discovery in the Community of Faiths *©2004 by Wayne Teasdale and Martha Howard. Permission granted by SkyLight Paths Publishing, P.O. Box 237, Woodstock, VT 05091 USA, www.skylightpaths.com.*

Robert F. Campbell

An Interfaith Family in Ghana

Kofi Agyepong



Last summer we at SACRED JOURNEY began a correspondence with one of our readers who wrote to us from Ghana, West Africa. He began by telling us how deeply this journal has affected him and his family and friends, and over the course of a few more aerogrammes (which are difficult for him to afford), he shared a part of his family's story. We have been moved by his words, by the tone of gratitude and love in each of his letters, and by his deep devotion both to his own God and to interfaith cooperation and respect. This last is especially poignant in his own story and we would like to share it with you here. The following are passages from his letters. Please keep in mind that English is not his native language.

We have been deeply affected by the fellowship books you send us and we pray that God protect and guide this organization forever and ever because this Fellowship in Prayer is the beginning of world unity. Thank you.

I was born in October 1970. Both my parents were not to get married because my father was a Muslim and my mother was a Christian, and in our society these two religions were not allowed to marry. But my dad

and mum were so much in love that this restriction could not stop them; so both my dad and mum left the town where they lived and settled somewhere else, because it was taboo.

But God kept them together for a long time, safe. I am the third born of my parents. I have four sisters and one brother. When I was born my parents still kept away from family in their exile. It was just recently, after reading many of your books *(SACRED JOURNEY journals)* that I realized that both my mum and dad had no problem because Fellowship in Prayer is about bringing spiritual unity. I went to talk with both my mother's family and my father's family and they have understood my sayings and both my parents have united with their various families. God is alive and I thank God for your books.

POEM
by Kofi Agyepong

The Sun promises that surely it will shine
The Rain promises that it will rain
The Wind promises that it will blow
The Sea promises to give waves
Oh God, how great are your promises

I know that he has promised that he will never fail me.

Thank you.

Kofi Agyepong

POETRY

Let Us

Corrine De Winter

Let us gather
in great numbers.
Let us reach out to others
in the name of Love.
Let us call Hope,
Peace and Faith
out loud
as many times as it takes
to be heard.
Together,
in the name of Love,
let us see
what we can change.

Corrine De Winter is the author of seven collections of verse. Her work has appeared in hundreds of journals and books including Comfort Prayers; Bless the Day; *and* The Language of Prayer. *She lives in western Massachusetts.*

Transients

Deborah Gordon Cooper

We are just passing through
these bones,

the way this wind
inhabits the ravine,

the way this light, in its
allotted time, illuminates
the hollow.

We are just passing through
these bones,

folding and opening
these limbs.

We work these hands,
making our sandwiches
and love;

look out at one another
from these faces,

watch a raven
trace the sky.

Deborah Gordon Cooper has used poetry extensively in her work as a hospice/hospital chaplain and has conducted workshops on the interfacing of poetry and spirituality.

The Last Temple

silent lotus

In
The
One
Last
Temple
Of love
Which
We
Shall
Ever
Build
There will
Be no walls
Or corridors
Just heavenly floors
Paved with the wisdom
Of an oh so divine
Omniscient
View

silent lotus is internationally known as an artist, poet, and spiritual advisor. He spends his time between Rotterdam (The Netherlands), Providence (Rhode Island), and Saba (an island in the Caribbean). Please visit him online at www.silentlotus.net, or email him at insight@silentlotus.net.

When the Rose is Wilted

Rumi

When the rose is wilted
and the garden faded,
you will no longer hear
the nightingale's song.
The Beloved is everywhere;
the lover just a veil.
The Beloved is living;
the lover a dead thing.
How will I remain awake and aware
if the light of the Beloved is absent?
Love shines its eternal light upon you.

(Mathnawi I, 23-31)

Jalaluddin Rumi was born in 1207 in Afghanistan. While he was young, his family was forced to flee the invading Mongols, and they settled in Turkey. Rumi was a Sufi, a mystic in the Islamic faith tradition. In his poetry, love is the soul of the universe, the interconnective tissue that heals all humans and their links to the divine, embracing all peoples, all countries, and all religions.

IT Loves To Happen

Sonya Milton

I often say lightheartedly that the only aspects of Judaism I acquired while growing up were food and guilt. Folks laugh. I laugh.

There seemed to be little religious interest or focus in my 1950's Bronx family. Following the death of my beloved grandfather when I was five, my mother would place a lighted Yartzeit candle on top of the refrigerator at the eve of the anniversary of his death. I liked that it burned for a full night and day, yet never knew its significance. Now I know that the Jewish day begins in the evening, and the yearly ritual is a proper commemoration. It is significant that in Judaism birthdays are played down; the date of birth of one who has died is not noted, yet there is care in marking the anniversary of someone's death.

And yes, we lit a menorah on each of the eight nights of Hannukah and ate matzo at Passover (tasting like pressed cardboard, my mother would claim). But we

Sonya Milton served Unity in Napa Valley as Senior Minister from 1996 through 2001. Previously, she spent over four years at Unity Church of Knoxville, Knoxville, TN and, while there, co-founded InsideOut Ministries with her husband, Rev. Hal Milton. She has extensive training in body therapies and in facilitating group process, and she is a certified Advanced Rolfer and Movement Teacher. It is her joy to honor the special, divine, and diverse qualities inherent in each individual. Visit her online at www.halmilton.com.

also decorated a Christmas tree, looking upon these days as rituals and cycles inherent within our year.

Certainly there were books and music and conversation, but no "God" talk. Yet, as I reflect back, I believe there was.

The way my mother would describe the creative energy of the universe and how it was available to each one of us was like this: " 'IT' loves to happen." And in some amorphous, undefined way, I understood. No bearded patriarch sternly peering down at me from heaven, no litany of right and wrong behavior that could land me in heaven . . . or hell.

Just "IT loves to happen." So, like many of my baby-boomer generation, I explored the teachings of the East, experimented with lifestyle, formed my own eclectic theology. I always loved being Jewish—I embraced its earthiness, and longevity, carrying it with pride. However, I knew literally nothing about the practice, the history and lineage. It seemed unavailable to me—synagogues that looked like churches, the strictness and family participation it claimed to require.

My journey has led and driven me to and through psychotherapy, Eastern-influenced meditation practices, guru-led spiritual groups, awareness seminars and, eventually, to the teachings of Charles and Myrtle Fillmore, co-founders of the Unity Movement, headquartered at Unity Village, just outside Kansas City in Lee's Summit, Missouri.

It was there that I came full circle. After a month in a residential program with classes primarily in Biblical History and Metaphysics, my husband and I rushed home to enroll in the Basic Judaism class at a local synagogue. It finally made sense. I had fallen in love

with the Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament, but also with the Gospels and the teachings of Jesus.

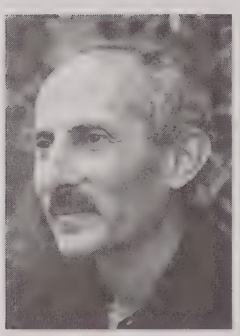
One year later my husband and I sold our home, packed the car and a U-Haul, and headed out to Missouri. We were both ordained as Unity Ministers in 1991. (One friend calls our brand of it Jewinity)

Perhaps the most powerful lesson I learned was that Jesus of Nazareth was Jewish too—a rabbi, revolutionary for his time, with a simple, powerful message and teaching. That the Kingdom of God—the Presence and Power and Creative Intelligence of the Universe—resides within each one of us, continually urging us into greater awareness, expression, and passion. So yes, "IT loves to Happen!"

Louise Hutner

The Path of Compassion

Jack Kornfield



How can we reconcile the question of service and responsibility in the world with the Buddhist concepts of non-self, non-attachment, and emptiness of self? First we must learn to distinguish love, compassion, and equanimity from what might be called their "near-enemies."

The near-enemy of love is attachment. It masquerades as love: "I love this person, I love this thing," which usually means, "I want to hold it, I want to keep it, I don't want to let it be." This is not love at all; it is attachment, and they are different. There is a big difference between love, which allows and honors and appreciates, and attachment, which grasps and holds and aims to possess.

The near-enemy of compassion is pity. Instead of feeling the openness of compassion, pity says, "Oh, that poor person! They're suffering, they're different from me," and this sets up separation and duality. "That is outside me. I want it. I need it to be complete." I and it are seen as different.

Jack Kornfield was trained as a Buddhist monk in Thailand, Burma, and in India, and has taught around the world since 1974. He also holds a Ph.D. in clinical psychology. He is a co-founder of the Insight Meditation Society in Barre, MA, and of the Spirit Rock Meditation Center in Woodacre, CA. His books include A Path With Heart, Seeking the Heart of Wisdom, Teachings of the Buddha, *and* After the Ecstasy, the Laundry. *For more information on Jack Kornfield and insight meditation visit www.spiritrock.org.*

The near-enemy of equanimity is indifference. It feels very equanimous to say, "I don't give a damn, I don't care, I'm not really attached to it," and in a way it is a very peaceful feeling, a great relief. Why is that? Because it is a withdrawal. It is a removal from world and from life. Can you see the difference? Equanimity, like love and compassion, is not a removal. It is being in the middle of the world and opening to it with balance, seeing the unity in things. Compassion is a sense of our shared suffering. Equanimity is a balanced engagement with life. The "near-enemies"—attachment, pity, and indifference—all are ways of backing away or removing ourselves from the things which cause fear. Meditation does not lead to a departure from the world. It leads to a deeper vision of it, one which is not self-centered, which moves from a dualistic way of viewing ("I and other") to a more spontaneous, whole, unified way. . .

If I wanted, I could make a very convincing case for just practicing sitting meditation and doing nothing else; and an equally convincing case for going out and serving the world. Looking at it from the first side, does the world need more oil and energy and food? Actually, no. There are enough resources for all of us. There is starvation, poverty, and disease because of ignorance, prejudice, and fear, because we hoard and create wars over imaginary geographic boundaries and act as if one group of people is different from another. What the world needs is not more oil, but more love and generosity, kindness and understanding. Until those are attained the other levels will never work. So you really have to sit and meditate and get that understanding in yourself first. Only when you have actually done it yourself can you have the insight to effectively help change the greed in the world and to love.

Thus, it is not a privilege to meditate, but a responsibility...

As for the other side, I only have to mention Cambodia or Somalia and the starvation in Central Africa and India, where the enormity of the suffering is beyond comprehension. In India alone, 350 million people live in such poverty that they have to work that day to get enough food to feed themselves that night, when they are lucky. How can we let this happen? Forty deaths per minute from starvation in the world; $714,000 a minute spent on machines to kill people. We must do something!

Both arguments are totally convincing. The question is how to choose what to do, what path to take, where to put our life energy, even which spiritual path to follow. . . For me the answer has been to simply follow the heart. Sometimes it is clear that we must take time to meditate and simplify—to do our inner work. Sometimes it is clear that we must begin to act and give and serve.

I can just share my own experience, which is very immediate. Ordinarily I spend my year teaching meditation retreats. A couple of years ago, though, war began raging in Cambodia. I know the people there and a couple of the local languages, and something in me said, "I'm going," and I went, not for very long but long enough to be of some assistance. This year, feeling a real need to bring a greater marriage of service and formal meditation, I went to India again with some friends to collect tapes for radio and television on the relationship between spiritual practice and social responsibility. And now I am back teaching meditation.

I did not think about it much at the time. It just seemed that it had to be done, and I went and did it. It was something immediate and personal. The spiritual path does not hold out some simple solution, some easy formula

for everyone to follow. It is not a question of imitation. You cannot be like Mother Teresa. She is Mother Teresa, and she is wonderful. Even if you tried you wouldn't be like her. You have to be yourself. That means listening to your heart and knowing the right thing to do, and then doing it in the spirit of growing in awareness and service.

It is not always easy. Nobody said it was supposed to be. . . There is a story about Mother Teresa and her ring. Someone said to Mother Teresa. "Well, you know, it's easier for you. You're not married or in a relationship." "What do you mean? I am married, "she answered, holding up the ring that signifies a nun's marriage to Jesus, "and he can be very difficult, too!"

. . . I will tell you a secret, what is really important in the practice: true love is really the same as awareness. They are identical. Not the near-enemies of "I want" or "I'm in love with," but deeper love than that. True love is to see the divine goodness, the Buddha nature, the truth of each moment, and to say, "Yes," to allow ourselves to open, to accept. That is our practice every moment, whether in sitting meditation or action-meditation, whether sitting on a cushion or sitting near the barricades in protest. It is to be aware, to see the truth which frees us. It is opening to what is now, to what is here, and to seeing it as it is.

Reprinted from The Path of Compassion: Writings on Socially Engaged Buddhism *(1985) edited by Fred Eppsteiner with permission of Parallax Press, Berkeley, California, www.parallax.org.*

PRAYERS

Prayer For Listening

Jay McDaniel

In this century and in any century,
Our deepest hope, our most tender prayer,
Is that we learn to listen.
May we listen to one another in openness and mercy.
May we listen to plants and animals in wonder and respect.
May we listen to our own hearts in love and forgiveness.
May we listen to God in quietness and awe.
And in this listening,
Which is boundless in its beauty,
May we find the wisdom to cooperate
With a healing spirit, a divine spirit,
Who beckons us into peace and community,
Into creativity and laughter.
We do not ask for a perfect world,
But we do ask for a better world.
We ask for deep listening.

Jay McDaniel, Ph.D. is professor of religion and director of the Steel Center for the Study of Religion and Philosophy at Hendrix College in Fayetteville, AR. His talks and writings have dealt with ecological theology, process theology, religion and science, and inter-religious dialogue. He is the author of Gandhi's Hope: Learning From Other Religions as a Path to Peace *and* Living From the Center: Spirituality in an Age of Consumerism.

Our Brokenness

Ojibway Prayer

Grandfather,
Look at our brokenness.

We know that in all creation
Only the human family
Has strayed from the Sacred Way.

We know that we are the ones
Who are divided
And we are the ones
Who must come back together
To walk in the Sacred Way.

Grandfather,
Sacred One,
Teach us love, compassion, and honor
That we may heal the Earth
And heal each other.

Forays Over The Rainbow

Jean Falls

As an older mom, I'm facing my elderly parents' chronic, debilitating health problems while raising a wide-eyed four-year-old. Surreal. While I am not particularly "churchy," I'm like one of that fairly large horde that describes itself as "spiritual"—a sometimes murky quality that leaves more than a few of us bereft—alienated from the rigid fundamentalist "answers" of our childhood, but struggling to locate something to replace a yearning for the sacred we acquired as children sitting still and small in church, a great organ churning out the old, moving hymns, the sun shining through colored glass into a vast, holy space while invisible angels move among us.

For several years, I tried to go back to church. I would cry at times, mourning for a faith I couldn't recapture and for a childhood of neatly packaged beliefs that no longer satisfied me. Also, I just plain missed the beauty of worship and a vaulted ceiling that had once convinced me that a heaven of rejoicing souls lay just beyond the roof tiles.

Jean Falls is a business writer who dreams of writing full time about parenting an adopted toddler and has developed an essay collection on the topic. She's an adoption advocate who would love to convince prospective parents currently undergoing fertility rituals that adopting children is a wondrous alternative.

Recently, I've been trying to speak to my four-year-old about God. I haven't at all abandoned the notion that he or she is out there or in here somewhere—or both—even if I find the fundamentalist version inadequate and cruel. But as a lapsed churchgoer, I don't have the typical Sunday school tools at my disposal. Emma's adopted from China, so this adds another dimension. I have no plans to ignore the Buddhist tradition so strong in her birth city, Guangzhou.

So far, talking about these matters has been tough going. God doesn't register yet. It's just a big, broad, vague, symbolic concept. But Emma woke the other night at 4:00 a.m. as she sometimes does, completely alert, even agitated. We had been watching the Wizard of Oz earlier the day before, one of her favorites.

"Mom, do witches and ghosts live over the rainbow?" she queried.

I answered that witches and ghosts don't really exist—not in the form that Emma imagined them to exist anyway.

"Does God live over the rainbow?" she asked, looking me squarely in the eye as if she knew she had really hit the mark with that one.

"Well, I hope so," was my answer. I had tried to teach Emma that God was in her heart and in her mind, too. Everywhere, really. Maybe some of that babble had seeped through after all. We had talked about Jesus and the Buddha and how some people seem so close to God, so much a part of God, that they bring messages to help us regular folk get closer, too. But maybe for now, over the rainbow was as good a place as any for God to be.

"What's it like over there?" she wondered.

"I hope it's a beautiful place," I answered, faltering

along this new path. "You know that Grandma and Grandpa are getting older (a vast understatement—my dad's a frail 92). When they die and go over the rainbow, I hope that they will go where they can rest and get strong again. They won't be sick and weak anymore. Then one day, when we get old, we can go and be with them."

Emma smiled faintly at the thought of all of this. It didn't seem the least bit harrowing to her. She did wonder about Molly, our dog. Some of the near-death experiences I've read about—those eerie journeys down the long dark tunnels and toward the light, etc.—include dogs, so I just said there was reason to hope that Molly might be there, too.

With the over-the-rainbow discussion behind us, I think I may have my first jumping off point for more talks about the mystery behind the appearance of things. My husband told me all along that I needed to wait, and I am starting to believe that I can't force any of this, but that my child will let me know when she is ready.

I don't know how the other side of the rainbow will reveal itself to Emma as she matures, that hallowed place so seemingly different from the grinding particulars of daily life. Maybe she will find the holy in these particulars as saints and mystics suggest we ought, and as her mother has never quite been able to do. I do know her vision will be her own. I can at least start her on a dimensional path that of course offers childhood's sheer delight, but also some less superficial opportunities to learn and thrive. I'm not sure any Sunday school books exist for a task this large—just a mother's focused love and my own small experiences of the sacred, brief and scattered, but real enough to make me want to pass them along.

Robert F. Campbell

Sabbath Time

Susan Gregg-Schroeder

Several years ago my husband, Stan, and I were on one of those frantic tours in Israel where you have to be at the bus or the dining room at an exact time. After cleaning up in our room from a day of touring, we went to the hallway to take an elevator to the dining room.

Not knowing the difference, we took the first available elevator. We were the only ones in the elevator when suddenly it came to an abrupt stop between floors. We just sat there waiting for it to start. As we were about to push the emergency button for help, the elevator started up again. But a short time later the same thing happened. It took us about ten minutes to go down eight floors!

When we got to the bottom, we found that we had taken the "shabbot" elevator since one is not supposed to use mechanical devices on the Jewish Sabbath. The hotel operated the shabbot elevator for handicapped persons. The stops reminded one that the Sabbath was a sacred time and space was provided for prayer.

Susan Gregg-Schroeder is Coordinator of Mental Health Ministries for the California-Pacific Conference of the United Methodist Church, and author of In the Shadow of God's Wings: Grace in the Midst of Depression. *Please visit her online at www.mentalhealthministries.net.*

We may have been late to dinner. But the greater realization was of how we have eroded Sabbath time. Many of us can remember when stores or businesses were closed on Sundays, especially in small towns. But with our worship of the almighty dollar, Sunday has become like any other day. When my daughter was applying for a fast-food job in high school, eyebrows were raised when she said she could not work Sunday mornings because of church.

We have few structured opportunities to intentionally practice Sabbath time. Many of those who spend an hour in worship once a week see that as fulfilling Sabbath time. But it is not enough. We are paying the price for ignoring our personal spiritual rhythms of Sabbath time in our relationship with work, with our families and in time spent with the Divine.

Be aware of the unexpected ways, like elevators stopping mid-floor, that may be calling you to reclaim Sabbath time in your life.

BOOK REVIEWS

Please enjoy these publishers' reviews of books that have recently come across our desk.

The Saints' Guide to Happiness
by Robert Ellsberg
North Point Press, a division of Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003
www.fsgbooks.com
212-741-6900

In *All Saints*—published in 1997—Robert Ellsberg told the stories of 365 holy people with great vividness and eloquence. In *The Saints' Guide to Happiness*, Ellsberg looks to the saints and asks: What is happiness, and how might we find it?

Countless books answer these questions in terms of personal growth, career success, physical fitness, and the like. *The Saints' Guide to Happiness* proposes instead that happiness consists of a grasp on the deepest dimension of our humanity, which characterizes only people past and present. The book offers a series of "lessons" in the life of the spirit: the struggle to feel fully alive in a frenzied society; the search for meaningful work, real friendship, and enduring love; the encounter with suffering and death; and the yearning to grasp the ultimate significance of our lives. In these "lessons," our guides are the saints: historical figures like Augustine, Francis of Assisi, and Teresa of

Avila, and moderns such as Dorothy Day, Flannery O'Connor, and Henri J. Nouwen. In the course of the book, figures familiar from stained-glass windows come to seem exemplars not just of holy piety but of "life in abundance," the quality in which happiness and holiness converge.

Robert Ellsberg became a Catholic in 1980 while a member of the Catholic Worker house in downtown Manhattan. He now serves as editor-in-chief of Orbis Books.

Judaism Inside Out: Reclaiming the Promise of Israel by Joshua Chasan
Water Wheel Press, Inc., 2005
209 North Prospect St., Burlington, VT 05401

"Every human being is equally unique. Each one of us is chosen. It is this creativity to which the story of God's promise to Abraham and Sarah points. In our day and age, this is the source of the inner strength of any spiritual tradition's capacity to pass the test of comparative religion: the understanding that one's own path to righteousness exists side by side with other ways of imagining integrity and moral viability." (pg.10)

Judaism Inside Out eloquently evokes the power of the spirituality of Israel. Far more than a nation-state, Israel is a way of human living. At a time when human violence threatens life itself, Jews all over the world are called to reclaim the spiritual purposes of their lives.

Just as the sages of Israel created rabbinical Judaism following the destruction of the Second Temple, Chasan urges contemporary Jews to be innovative, in thought and practice, in the wake of the Holocaust and the

reestablishment of independent Jewish sovereignty.

This is an important book for Jews and non-Jews alike, a challenge for religious pluralists of all traditions to seize the opportunity to redefine contemporary political discourse. Exposing the bigotry of religious and national fundamentalism, *Judaism Inside Out* reclaims for religion a politics based on the personal quest for self-respect and mutual acceptance.

Joshua Chasan has served as spiritual leader of Ohavi Zedek Synagogue in Burlington, Vermont since 1991. He received his rabbinic ordination from The Jewish Theological Seminary of America and a doctorate in American history from The University of Pittsburgh.

Life Ahead: On Learning and the Search for Meaning by J. Krishnamurti
New World Library, 2005
www.newworldlibrary.com
800-972-6657 or 415-884-2100

This book was first published in 1963 by the Krishnamurti Foundation of America and has just been re-published by New World Library.

Drawn from transcripts of talks given to Indian students, *Life Ahead* covers a wide range of universal topics. Krishnamurti presents lessons that move far beyond the traditional forms of education taught in most schools and colleges. In short, accessible chapters, he explores topics such as the danger of competition, the value of solitude, the need to understand both the conscious and the unconscious mind, and the critical difference between concentration and attention, and between knowledge and learning. Krishnamurti

exposes the roots of fear and eradicates deeply entrenched habits of tradition, limitation, and prejudice. The life he holds forth requires a complete change of thought, even a revolution, one that begins "not with theory and ideation," he writes, "but with a radical transformation in the mind itself." He explains how such transformation occurs only through an education that concentrates on the total development of the human being, an education carefully described in this simple yet powerful book.

Jiddu Krishnamurti was one of the great spiritual philosophers of our time. He was born in 1895 in India. By the 1920s he was attracting worldwide press attention and audiences of thousands. For more than sixty years he traveled the world, teaching his philosophy to millions, bound by no caste, nationality, religion, or tradition. His talks have been preserved in over seventy books. He died in 1986 in Ojai, California.

ENDPIECE

What's In A Kiss?

Leo Kane

I had just come home, exhausted from a heavy day at work. All I wanted after tea was to relax and read the paper. My youngest son was heading to bed. I always gave him a "goodnight" kiss. Tonight I just didn't feel like going. It took a moment to realize that his goodnight kiss was something very special to me. It was a transcendent moment each night which took me out of myself into this very special relationship with my son. Here was God waiting for me each night—until he was about twelve.

"I'm going to bed, Dad" he said.

"O.K." I replied.

"No need to come", he said.

"No! I'll come!"

"No! No need to!"

So I stayed, disappointed. A few minutes later he appeared in his pyjamas to give *me* a goodnight kiss. God was very much in that kiss.

When he went to boarding school, he gave both me and my wife a kiss every time we visited, without inhibiton in front of his mates. And now that he's twenty, whenever he leaves after a visit, he gives us a kiss. This is one moment of my day when I recognize God who comes out of disguise and is real for me.

Leo Kane B.A., AD.Dip. Ed., M.Th, has been a principal for seventeen years, a secondary consultant for twelve years and a facilitator in staff spirituality for the last six years in the Archdiocese of Sydney, Australia.

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